

## Significant Ecological Estuarine Area Assessment Sheet for Wading and Aquatic Birds

Name/Area: Waipu Estuary

### Summary:

Waipu Estuary is a very small estuary lying approximately midway between Mangawhai Estuary and Whangarei Harbour. The estuary and the Waipu River (which enters the estuary from the north-west) are currently poorly buffered and so are significantly impacted by adjacent development. However, the estuary still supports important breeding birds, notably NZ fairy tern (CR) and northern NZ dotterel (NV), both of which breed on the sandspit and forage in the estuary and along the sea-coast in the case of the tern. A number of other bird species, including national and international migrants, utilise the estuary for seasonal feeding (refer Table below). On this basis the Waipu Estuary is ranked as High in ecological significance. The estuary is an internationally important site recognised by the Important Bird Area programme<sup>1</sup> triggered by the following species: NZ Fairy Tern; Black-billed Gull; NZ Dotterel; Wrybill; NZ Dotterel and Australasian Bittern.

Table 'Threatened' and 'At Risk' shorebird species present at Waipu Estuary<sup>2</sup>

<i>Species Scientific Name</i>	<i>Species Common Name</i>	<i>NZ threat classification</i>		<i>Significance for species</i>
<i>Ardea modesta</i>	White heron	Threatened	Nationally critical	Rare visitor
<i>Sternula nereis davisae</i>	NZ fairy tern	Threatened	Nationally critical	Nationally important breeding and feeding
<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	Pied shag	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Locally important feeding site
<i>Egretta sacra sacra</i>	Reef heron	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Local feeding site
<i>Anarhynchus frontalis</i>	Wrybill	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Locally important feeding site
<i>Charadrius obscurus aquilonius</i>	Northern NZ dotterel	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Nationally important breeding and feeding
<i>Charadrius bicinctus bicinctus</i>	Banded dotterel	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Locally important feeding area
<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Lesser knot	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Locally important feeding area
<i>Larus novaehollandiae scopulinus</i>	Red-billed gull	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Locally important
<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	Caspian tern	Threatened	Nationally vulnerable	Locally important for feeding

<sup>1</sup> Gaskin, C, 2013. Important areas for New Zealand seabirds, Part 1 – North Island. Compilation for Forest & Bird / BirdLife International.

<i>Haematopus finschi</i>	NZ pied oystercatcher	At Risk	Declining	Locally important for feeding
<i>Himantopus himantopus leucocephalus</i>	Pied stilt	At Risk	Declining	Locally important for feeding
<i>Sterna striata</i>	White-fronted tern	At Risk	Declining	Locally important for feeding
<i>Limosa lapponica baueri</i>	Eastern bar-tailed godwit	At Risk	Declining	Important feeding area for migrants
<i>Haematopus unicolor</i>	Variable oystercatcher	At Risk	Recovering	Nationally important breeding and feeding area
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae</i>	Black shag	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Locally important for feeding
<i>Phalacrocorax melanoleucos brevirostris</i>	Little shag	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Locally important for feeding and sometimes nesting
<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	Little black shag	At Risk	Naturally uncommon	Locally important for feeding

Key references:

Pulham, G., Wilson, D. 2013 [updated 2015]. Fairy tern. *In* Miskelly, C.M. (ed.) *New Zealand Birds Online* [www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz](http://www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz)

## Estuaries Reliability Notes and Key References

Site	Assessor	Date	Key references (see below)	Data reliability
North Kaipara	RP	Oct 2015	3, 4, 6, 14, 15	High
Mangawhai	RP	Oct 2015	1, 2, 4, 6, 13, 14	High
Waipu	RP	Oct 2015	1, 2, 6, 13,14	High
Ruakaka	RP	Oct 2015	6, 13	High
Whangarei	RP	Oct 2015	3, 6, 9, 14, 15	High
Taiharuru	RP	Oct 2015	10, 14	High
Pataua	RP	Oct 2015	10, 14	Moderate – High
Horahora	RP	Oct 2015	14, 15	Moderate – High
Ngunguru	RP	Oct 2015	6. 10, 14	High
Matapouri	RP	Oct 2015	10, 15	High
Whananaki	RP	Oct 2015	5, 14, 15	High
Whangaruru	RP	Oct 2015	5, 6, 14, 15	High
Bay of Islands	RP	Oct 2015	5, 6, 14, 15	High
Whangaroa	RP	Oct 2015	14, 15	Moderate – High
Mangonui-Taipa	RP	Oct 2015	14, 15	Moderate –High
Rangaunu	RP	Oct 2015	1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 14, 15	High
Houhora	RP	Oct 2015	3, 6, 11, 14	High
Parengarenga	RP	Oct 2015	1, 3, 6, 7, 14, 15	High
Whangape-Herekino	RP	Oct 2015	14, 15	Moderate – High

Hokianga	RP	Oct 2015	6, 8, 15	High
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#### Key references:

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2. Dowding, J.E., Davis, A.M., 2007. New Zealand dotterel (*Charadrius obscurus*) recovery plan, 2004–14. Threatened Species Recovery Plan 58. NZ Department of Conservation.
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4. Ismar, S.M.H. et al 2013. Foraging ecology and choice of feeding habitat in the New Zealand Fairy Tern *Sternula nereis davisae*. *Bird Conservation International* 24: 72 – 87.
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7. Pierce R.J. 1999. Regional patterns of migration in the banded dotterel *Charadrius bicinctus*. *Notornis* 46: 101-122.
8. Pierce R.J. 2002. Assessment of ecological effects of proposed bridges and associated roadworks at Hokianga Harbour, Northland. Wildland Consultants Contract Report No. 575.
9. Pierce R.J. 2005. General patterns of bird use of Whangarei Harbour. Wildland Consultants Report No. 1047 for Northland regional Council.
10. Pierce R.J. 2007. Options for ecological restoration of the Tutakaka Landcare Coalition (TLC) area and neighbouring areas. *Eco Oceania Ltd* report for Tutukaka Landcare Coalition.
11. Pierce, R.J., Kerr, V.C, 2004. Effects of oyster farms on estuarine avifauna at Houhora Harbour, Northland. Contract Report No. 899, Report prepared for: Department of Conservation Private Bag 841 Whangarei.
12. Pierce, R.J., Kerr, V.C., 2007. Ecological Restoration of the Taiharuru Catchment. Report prepared for the Taiharuru Catchment Group. Eco Oceania Ltd.
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14. Robertson, C.J.R., Hyvönen, P., Fraser, M.J., Pickard, C.R. 2007. *Atlas of bird distribution in New Zealand 1999-2004*. OSNZ, Wellington.
15. SSBI. Sites of Special Biological Significance. Department of Conservation Series, Northland.